

**THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN THE LEARNING OF THEIR CHILDREN AT  
A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

by

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DECLARATION

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**TOPIC OF THE STUDY**

**THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS IN THE LEARNING OF THEIR CHILDREN AT  
A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA.**

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



10 October 2019

SIGNATURE

DATE

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedication to my husband, Rewai, and my children, Tadiwanashe, Tinodashe, Tasimbiswa and Tariro for their unwavering support throughout my studies. May God richly bless them.

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I thank my Lord Jesus Christ for carrying me through the whole process of my thesis. My sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor MJ Motseke, for supervising me accordingly. I would like to thank the Private School that permitted me to do my research and participants who were involved during data collection.

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on parental involvement in the learning of children at a private school in Windhoek. Nine parents with children at the Private School were used as participants. This was a qualitative study where semi-structured interviews were used.

Findings were that parental involvement leads to children's academic achievement, enhances children's self-esteem, encourages children's participation in sports, and strengthens relationships between parents and teachers thereby facilitating the development of the school.

Ways of parental involvement examined included helping with homework, attending parent meetings, and providing children with resources.

Barriers to parental involvement included lack of time, economic challenges, lack of understanding of what parental involvement entails and lack of transport.

The study established that parental involvement can be achieved through addressing barriers to parental involvement by educating parents on parental involvement and through creating a conducive environment at school level for parents to be involved.

## **KEY TERMS:**

Children; learning; Namibia; parental involvement; parents; private school

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A number of scholars have observed the importance of parental involvement in the learning of their children (Shute, Hansen, Underhood & Razzouk 2011:1; Topor, Keane, Shelton, Caltins 2010:183). Parental involvement is also associated with child's academic achievement (Hornby & Lafaele 2011:39; Rafiq, Fatima, Sohail, Saleem & Khani 2013:209). Olsen and Fuller (2010:2) explain that parental involvement enhances children's self-esteem and self-discipline. It is also noted that parental involvement improves a child's morale (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014:43).

Parental involvement leads to learners having positive attitudes and behaviours (Kraft & Dougherty 2013:7; McCormic, Capella, Connor & McClowry 2013:278-279). Beack (2010:550) states that parental involvement and cooperation with schools helps to improve attendance and grades of pupils in schools. Such findings by scholars suggest that the importance that parents attach to the education of their children has an impact on learning outcomes of these children. It is therefore important to conduct a study on the involvement of parents at a private school in Windhoek. This would enable one to establish how parents are involved with the learning of children at the school and to determine potential benefits of such involvement.

Parental involvement takes many forms as indicated by Vellymalay (2012:42) who mentions Epstein's six types of involvement. These are parenting, communication, voluntary involvement, learning at home, decision-making and cooperation with community which provide various opportunities for school, family and community to cooperate with one another. According to Bæck (2010:549):

Parental involvement in schools includes a variety of things, such as participation in parent meetings and parent-teacher conferences, helping with homework, organising a good workplace at home, showing an interest with what goes on at school and emphasising the importance of education.

This shows that parental involvement encompasses all the support that parents give towards the learning of their children from home to school.

Motlhagodi and Kasule (2015:133) explain that parental involvement may be home-based or school-based. In addition, Murray, Finigan-Carr, Jones, Copeland-Linder, Haynies and Cheng (2014:2) confirm that home-based learning may be directly related

to school work. This suggests that parents can also help the child with school-related work at home.

Von Otter (2014:558) points out that it can be assumed that parents with greater experience of education and school-based learning can provide more practical help with creating a conducive environment for the child to do schoolwork, for example, allocating time and a place for study, using extra-curricular text books and hiring private tutors. Contrary to that, Radu (2011:109) presents a challenge faced by income-stressed parents who spend long hours at work as they try to eke out a living, thereby leaving no time to devote to other responsibilities and demands in life including assisting their children with schoolwork. This will put their children at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts who may be endowed with privileges and resources to enhance their learning.

Research and literature have reported some factors that affect achievement in learning. One of the reasons for such a failure is lack of parental involvement (Larocque, Kleinman & Darling 2011). Garcia (2014:69) points out that the belief system of parents affects the way they are involved in their children's learning. Hornby and Lafaele (2011:39) state that parents of high-performing children strongly believe that that they could successfully help their children to do better at school, while parents who regard the education of their children as the responsibility of the school may not be willing to be so diligently involved.

In this study, parental involvement is understood as referring to activities undertaken by parents to support the individual child with school issues or needs. Parental involvement may also refer to interactions that take place between the child and parent outside of school such as helping with homework (Motlhagodi & Kasule 2015:133). In addition to the above statements, Price-Mitchell (2012:1) mentions the need for teachers to facilitate a positive home-school relationship when they help parents to understand the value of assigned homework, how parents can assist with homework and the type of homework environment that will be conducive to success.

This study was aimed at finding reasons why some parents were not involved in the learning of their children and to suggest how best to improve parental involvement at a private school in Windhoek, Namibia.

## 1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The private school does not have a comprehensive programme that ensures that all parents are involved in the education of their children. Some parents place their children in aftercare in the afternoons so that their children can be helped with homework. There seems to be no action taken against parents who are not involved. This explains the need to find out the extent of parental involvement at the private school concerned with the intention of addressing shortcomings.

The study was aimed at investigating parental involvement at a private school in Windhoek with the intention of finding possible remedial action to detected shortcomings.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Parental involvement is related to academic success (Emerson, Fear, Fox and Sanders 2012:11). In fact, lack of parental involvement hinders academic progress of children (Emerson et al. 2012:11). Despite the fact that literature supports parental involvement in the education of their children, it is possible that at a private school in Windhoek, some parents may not be involved in the education of their children. In addition, the nature of parental involvement at the said school and the potential benefits of such involvement is not known. Sapungan and Sapungan (2014:44) mention that parents often face challenges that hinder them from being involved such as attitude, logistics, system barriers and lack of skills.

### 1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

#### 1.4.1 Research Question

What is the nature of parental involvement in the learning of their children?

#### 1.4.2 Sub-Questions

1. In cases where parents might be involved and not be involved in the learning of their children, what could be the reasons?
2. What are the benefits of parental involvement in the learning of their children?
3. How can parents be involved in the learning of their children?
4. What are the challenges faced in parental involvement?

### 1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

#### 1.5.1 Aims of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate factors contributing to poor parental involvement at a private school in Windhoek and to establish potential benefits of such involvement.

#### 1.5.2 Objectives of the study

In order to achieve the aim, the following objectives needed to be realised:

1. To identify the reasons for parental involvement or lack thereof in the learning of their children.
2. To highlight the benefits of parental involvement in the learning of their children.
3. To identify ways through which parents can be involved in the learning of their children.
4. To determine challenges faced with regard to parental involvement in the education of their children.

#### 1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This was a qualitative study that employed the stakeholder participation theory. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:433) define a stakeholder as a person, organisation or group that is interested in or impacted by a situation. In this regard, parents and teachers work hand-in-hand with a common goal of helping the learner. The stakeholder participation theory was used to encompass all stakeholders involved in the learning of learners.

Parents may participate in the learning of their children through becoming members of the parent-teacher associations, volunteering in school activities and helping their children with homework (Rafiq et al., 2013:213; Sapungan and Sapungan 2013:145). The participation of parents in the learning of their children may also promote positive feelings in these children, which is important for effective learning (Zhou 2014:72).

#### 1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research is a case study of a private school in Windhoek. It falls within the qualitative research paradigm. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:322) confirm that qualitative research is rich in narrative description. This makes the design ideal as the study dwells on descriptive data. This means it was interactive and the interpretive

qualitative design made use of the narrative approach. This was necessary as it employed semi-structured interviews.

## 1.8 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING STRATEGY

### 1.8.1 Population

A population refers to the total collection of members, cases or elements about which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions and make generalisations (Babbie 2010:199; Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin & Zikmund 2015:170-1; Sekeran & Bougie 2016:240). Bhattacharjee (2012:65) reiterates that population refers to people with the characteristics that one wishes to study. In this study, the population consisted of parents with children at a private school in Windhoek.

### 1.8.2 Sample

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) describe a sample as a group of individuals from which data are collected. Dane (2011:107) confirms that a sample is a portion of the elements in a population. Nine parents were used as a sample from which data were collected.

### 1.8.3 Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was used in this study since it enabled the researcher to select information-rich sources. According to Bhattacharjee (2012:65), "Sampling is the statistical process of selecting the subset called 'a sample' of population of interest for purposes of making observation and statistical inferences about that population".

Sampling decisions are made for the purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions (Maree 2013:79). In this study, the researcher approached parents with children from Grades 1 to 3 who were willing to share information on parental involvement.

## 1.9 DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews were used in the research. Semi-structured interviews are characterised by increased levels of flexibility which allows interactional exchange of dialogue (Edwards & Holland 2013:3; Maree 2013:5). Alsaawi (2014:151) mentions that semi-structured "...questions are pre-planned prior to the interview but the interviewer gives the interviewee a chance to elaborate and explain issues through the use of open-ended questions".

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:396) reiterate that open-ended questions allow for individual responses. Open-ended questions enable the researcher to elicit meaningful data through a comprehensive strategy (Creswell, 2012:130). An interview guide which simply list the points which the researcher wants to cover is essential for the researcher during semi-structured interviews. The research guide allows the researcher to keep the the interview focused upon the research subject (Roberts-Holmes, 2014:133).

In this research, the researcher made an appointment at convenient times with participants who were interviewed. This is supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:329) who note that, during the planning phase, the researcher needs to access the site or network of persons.

Interview questions were designed for parents. Each interview consisted of ten questions. Each interview took about 20-30 minutes. Each participant was asked the same questions using the same wording, with difference in the follow-up questions. These were used to solely to clarify the responses of the interviewees.

The parents chosen to participate in the interviews were parents with children from Grades 1 to 3 at a private school in Windhoek. Prior to choosing the parents to be interviewed the researcher put the participants into two groups: parents with low socioeconomic status and parents with high socioeconomic status, as defined earlier in this chapter. These parents were numbered and coded then randomly selected for interviewing.

Audio recordings were done during the interviews with the consent of the interviewees to support handwritten notes. For those who preferred not to be recorded, the researcher had to write notes during the interview sessions. Open-ended questions were used in order to obtain more information and also for clarity. This is in line with Berg (2001, cited in Larrotta & Yamamura 2011:77), who is of the opinion that audio recordings help in producing accurate field notes.

Audio recordings were transcribed as a summary in written form. The findings were recorded on an interview record sheet. Interviews were then fully transcribed, reviewed and examined to find the common threads.

#### 1.10 DATA ANALYSIS

After transcribing the interviews, the researcher read them carefully in order to have a full understanding of what the participants had said. This process was repeated so that no information would be missed. Coding was then done by assigning a colour for each category. This was done by looking at themes and ideas. Data were then subjected to descriptive analysis and interpreted accordingly. A summary of the findings followed.

Categorising interviews were refined by listing key ideas and phrases. Views from participants were compared with established knowledge in the field as found in the reviewed literature in order to check for commonalities (Maree 2013:109).

#### 1.11 ETHICAL ISSUES

The participants were asked to sign a consent form to agree to participate. They were also informed that they were allowed to withdraw whenever they felt like. This was done to respect their choice to participate. The researcher also explained the purpose of the research to participants in order to make an informed decision about whether to be involved.

Participants were assured of confidentiality. They were informed that their real names would not be disclosed and information they give would not be revealed to other people. This procedure is supported by Ryen (2004, as cited in Silverman, 2011:428) who avers: "...the researcher is responsible for informed consent, for trust and protection and for protecting participants' privacy by confidentiality". The participants were also assured that, in this study, information would only be used for research purposes.

#### 1.12 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

##### 1.12.1 Parental involvement:

According to Ireland (2014:1), parental involvement means the role played by parents when they become involved with school activities and programmes in order to give a hand in the learning of their children. Share and Kerrins (2013:359) note that parental involvement entails parents, families and practitioners working together to benefit the children.

Bæck (2010:549) explains that parental involvement in schools includes "...participation in parent meetings and parent-teacher conferences, helping with

homework, organising a good workplace at home, showing an interest with what goes on at school, and emphasising the importance of education". All definitions apply to this study since they are closely related.

#### 1.12.2 Parent/ Guardian

Coetzee, Van Niekerk and Wyderman (2008:132) define a parent as a person legally entitled to custody of a learner. Illiger (2013:42) asserts that a guardian is an individual responsible for the child's upbringing, nurture and care. Strathern (2011:246) further explains that to be a parent is to have a child. Both definitions apply in this study. In this study, a guardian and parent are both be referred to as a parent as they are assumed to play the same role in the learning of children.

#### 1.12.3 Learning

Merriam and Bierema (2014:26) define learning as a change in behaviour. Knowles, cited in Malamed (2016:online) explains learning as the process of gaining knowledge, or skill of studying, practising, being taught or experiencing something. Both definitions apply to the study.

#### 1.12.4 Adult

Lauglo (undated, as cited, in Quan-Baffour & McKay, 2009:67) highlighted that adults are persons above 14 years. An adult is also conceived as a human being over the age and will be emotionally and mentally mature (Collins English Oxford Dictionary, 2017, s.v. "adult"). The definition by Lauglo will be used in this study.

#### 1.12.5 Public school

Thapa (2011:1) and Belguidoum (2015:1) describe a public school as one that is run by the government and adheres to standards and regulations given while remaining within the established budget. Thapa (2011:1) added that public schools are financed and managed by the state.

#### **1.12.6 Private School**

Private schools are fee-paying, independent institutions that are free from many rules and regulations applied to state schools (Fabrett 2011:123, Jerrim, Parker, Chmielewski & Jake 2016:283).



Belguidoum (2015:1) reiterates that private schools are free to determine their curriculum and staffing policies, with voluntary accreditation authorities. For the purpose of this study, all definitions are used.

#### 1.13 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

##### 1.13.1 Limitations

The use of a small number of parents resulted in getting some limited views on parental involvement.

##### 1.13.2 Delimitations

The study concentrated on parents with children at a private school in Windhoek. Furthermore, the study was conducted only at a private school in Windhoek.

#### 1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 provided the background to this study on the importance of parental involvement in the learning of their children. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the rationale for the study as well as the main objectives of the study. The significance of the study has been examined together with the study's limitations and delimitations. Key concepts were defined. The next chapter provides a review of literature related to this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews related literature. The chapter starts by navigating through scholarly definitions on parental involvement. Other areas under review include barriers to parental involvement, the benefits of parental involvement and areas in which parents can be involved. The reviewed literature suggests that, when managed competently, parental involvement can improve performance of learners at school.

#### 2.2 DEFINITION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood (Deka 2016:58). Parental involvement includes listening to children, supervision of homework and attending to parent-teacher meetings (Hornby & Lafaele 2011:37). In this regard, aspects related to parental involvement will be discussed in this chapter.

#### 2.3 THE NATURE OF PARENTS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Parents under study are those with children at a private school in Windhoek. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2012:26) mentions that learners who attend privately managed schools tend to be those from more privileged socioeconomic backgrounds. Social economic status is determined by a person's salary, employment position, and educational attainment (Malone, 2017:58).

Parents from higher socioeconomic status and high levels of education may enhance parents' ability to become involved in their children's school success (Kainuwa & Yusef 2013:2). On the contrary, Malone (2017:57) highlights that parents from low social class are weak in parental involvement and have limited access to resources and opportunities.

#### 2.4 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT BY COUNTRY

##### 2.4.1 Parental Involvement in Zimbabwe

Ngwenya and Pretorius (2014:702) posit that in Zimbabwe parental involvement was mandatory in public schools since the government had little resources to provide education on its own. The most popular ways in which parents participated were

through working for the school and attending school meetings (Mutasa, Goronga and Gatsi 2013:22). In addition, parents were involved through moulding bricks, carrying pit sand, river sand and water for construction of ramps, pavements and toilets (Mutasa et al. 2013:22). Tshuma and Ncube (2013:14) reiterated that parents provided financial support and labour in building schools. Parents were involved in sport by coaching, by accompanying their children to far away sporting activities, and by watching and cheering during home or local matches (Tshuma & Ncube 2013:19-20).

Ngwenya and Pretorius (2014:702) state that parents in Zimbabwe were involved through paying school fees, fund-raising activities, infrastructural development, purchasing uniforms and assisting learners with homework. However, many parents were not involved in the education of their children due to a lack of resources such as transport and that fact that school events coincided with the parents' busy schedules (Ngwenya & Pretorius 2014:703). Nevertheless, the involvement of parents in the education of their children in Zimbabwe is mandatory since the government cannot provide education on its own due to limited resources. Hence Ngwenya and Pretorius (2014:704) indicate that school-community relationships are sound, and led to the improvement in the 2013 Grade 7 results. Parental involvement in the education of their children includes attending meetings, offering to do manual labour in schools, financial support, fund-raising and assisting with homework (Tshuma & Ncube 2013:13).

#### 2.4.2 Parental Involvement in Turkey

Tekin (2011:5) notes that parental involvement in Turkey takes place in the form of fund-raising volunteer activities. Sad and Gubuzturk (2010:487) add that parental involvement is done in the form of attending teacher-parent meetings, financial support and monitoring the child's homework.

Gündüz (2018:496) mentions that parental involvement takes place through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). PTAs create unity between parents and teachers, since they supported activities that improved education and learning (Gündüz 2018:496). Among other roles of PTAs in Turkey, Ozmen and Canpolat (2010:1947) note that parents provide support for improvement of student performance, purchasing goods and services of learners and providing financial support to learners who need help. Tekin (2011:3) also notes that School Family Associations were involved in activities

that include parent education, parent-teacher conferences, organising events for parents and learners, parent-to-parent communication and fund-raising activities Gündüz (2018:495) notes that the Turkish Ministry of National Education also arranged family training courses for age groups who are under 18 years in order to strengthen social development and prosperity. The activities included family education, development of father support programme and women literacy and training programmes which were aimed at making parental involvement more effective for students (Tekin 2011:3).

Hakyemez (2015:7) notes that the Mother-Child Education Foundation is a non-governmental organisation which has the philosophy that parents are the first teachers of children; hence, it is impossible to achieve better educational results without involving the parents in establishing suitable learning environments at home. This organisation equips parents with skills on parental involvement through creating learning environments which benefit their children as they learn at home.

#### 2.4.3 Parental Involvement in America

Watson, Sander-Lawson and McNeal (2012:41) mentioned that poor parental involvement in America had been a concern for public officials for many years. It was only at the beginning of 20th century that parents began to be involved in the nursery schools (Tekin, 2011:1). Parents helped their children in completing their homework, communicated with the school on matters of concern, listened to the children as they read and made contact with the subject teachers of their children to find areas in which children faced problems (Hornby & Lafaele 2011:44). Knight, Dorsch, Osai, Haderlie and Sellars (2016:161) mention that, in regard to sports, parents took their children for training, competition matches and also cheered their children during sports events.

However, Huntsinger and Jose (2009:399) note that parents who immigrated to United States may not be comfortable in being involved due to factors like language barriers, low education levels, and unfamiliarity with United States classroom practices.

### 2.5 THEORIES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

#### 2.5.1 Cognitive Development Theory

Tekin (2011:4) says at a level of cognitive development, the constructive role of experience with peers and family members is emphasised. Tekin (2011:5) notes that children learn best when they are socialised by parents who assist them to adapt to

the environment that they share. Children learn best when parents interact with them in doing homework as this may help children to construct their own knowledge within a social and physical environment.

#### 2.5.2 Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory describes the relationship between human beings and their physical and social environment (Vygotsky 1978:57). Parents as the first teachers of a child have an important role in the wellbeing, learning and development of the child (Fitzpatrick 2012:265). Kocayörük (2016:1-2) mentions that schools also contribute towards the total development of children. It therefore shows the need for families to partner with schools for the children to develop.

#### 2.5.3 Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory was introduced by Uri Bronfenbrenner (Tekin 2011:5). Kocayörük (2016:3) mentions that the theory emphasises the importance of establishing an effective home-school partnership. If the community is added to the school-family partnership, resources and support needed for the children to succeed will also be added (Jönsdötr, 2015:26). O'Donnell and Kirkner (2014:214) say that "Methods of encouraging family-based involvement in school-based programs include providing child care, transportation, food, flexible scheduling, and developing culturally appropriate and relevant programs". Iline (2017:276) deduced that "the relationship between a child and parent tends to have a stable and enduring effect on the child's acquisition of knowledge and morals". Bronfenbrenner (1979, as cited in Tekin, 2011:5) reiterated that, "...the development of children is affected not only by the factors within the child but also by family and surrounding world".

The experience of the children at school includes a system that involves parents, family and community; apart from the communication between them, the school or teacher (Tekin 2011:5). Santrock (2004, as cited in Iline, 2017:276) avers that "the individual is a hub in a system which includes five environmental systems that range from close interpersonal interactions to broad-based influences of culture". The systems, as noted by Kocayörük (2016:2-3, citing Bronfenbrenner, 1978), are the microsystem, mesosystem, macrosystem, exosystem and chronosystem. Krishnan (2010:7) states that the microsystem refers to the child's environment comprising of his or her siblings, friends, parents and relatives included in his or her daily activities.

Tekin (2011:6) notes that the mesosystem connects the microsystem and exosystem: this is where the interrelations among two or more settings, for example, home, school and neighbourhood of the child will be the most active. Iline (2017:277) states that the exosystem consists of one or more settings that does not directly involve the child although they have an impact on their life.

The macrosystem includes attitudes and ideologies of the cultures, for example, laws, morals, values, customs and worldviews (Tekin 2011:6). These elements may not be part of children's immediate world although they may have an impact on their development.

Santrock (2014, as cited in Iline, 2017:277) says that the "chronosystem emphasises more on environmental factors and their role in the development and learning of the children". This implies that human development is affected by environmental factors. The chronosystem is concerned with change over time in the nature of each system and interactions between systems (Kocayörük 2016:3).

Kocayörük (2016:2-3) notes that difficulties that face the child at school affect the child's behaviour at home while the problems in the family affects the child's behaviour and achievement at school. Prior and Gerard (2007, as cited in Tekin, 2011:6) say that "The development of the child is enhanced when linkages among components of this system are strong and positive".

## 2.6 BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Hornby and Laefele (2011:40) point out that some barriers to parental involvement are lack of confidence, language barriers and negative experiences at the children's previous schools. Von Otter (2014:558) concurs that parents who are not well educated lack confidence to meaningfully assist their children with learning activities. This means they are not very helpful in school activities of their children.

Young, Austin and Growe (2013:292) note that there is a lack of understanding of what parental involvement implies. This implies that schools and parents might lack information on what is expected in parental involvement, thereby negatively impacting on such involvement.

### 2.6.1 Lack of Resources

Watson et al. (2012:46) report that lack of resources and poverty hinder parental involvement. Activities associated with parental involvement are not sufficiently funded, thereby making it almost impossible to mount viable and sustainable parental involvement programmes (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011:49). This is supported by Watson et al., (2012:46) who mention that parents who are less skilled and uneducated find it difficult to educate their children.

Lack of transportation and childcare also prevent families from attending or volunteering in the school (Bower & Griffin 2011:79; Malone 2017:59). In addition, parents who are unemployed may not be able to afford a car or to pay babysitters in order to get to school meetings (Hornby & Lafaele 2011:40).

Malone (2017:59) maintains that learners from poor family backgrounds do not do well at school while those who come from privileged families tend to outperform them. Sukhbaatar (2014:200) mentions that parents are not motivated to attend meetings due to teachers' negative attitudes towards children from poor families. Saifi and Mehmood (2011:120) add that parents from low-income families do not encourage free expression or debates among their children which causes them to perform poorly at school.

#### 2.6.2 Tensions between Parents and Teachers.

Culture is one factor that has been identified as hampering some parents from being involved in the learning of their children, thereby negatively affecting success of such children at school. For instance, there may be poor cooperation between educators and families due to cultural differences (Malone 2015:15).

Sukbaatar (2014:194) contends that parents do not feel like partners with the school, and the initial reaction they receive when communicating with teachers is that they are interfering. Watson et al. (2012:46) reiterate that parents lack adequate information and perceptions of whether teachers want them to be involved or not.

Lack of close relationships and cooperation between the school and parents negatively affects the education of children (Velleymalay 2012:42). Watson et al. (2012:47) mention the influence of school officials as they assume that parents are lazy, incompetent and preoccupied to participate in school programmes which can lead to bitter confrontations between the two parties. Sapungan and Sapungan

(2014:44) also highlight parents' pessimistic attitudes towards their children's schools as a hindrance to parental involvement.

Ellis, Lock and Lummis (2015:168) confirm that teachers see parents as being suspicious and hostile, and thus feel that if they avoid contacting parents, they may reduce confrontations. This notion is supported by Sukhbaatar (2014:194) who concurs that teachers feel that interacting with parents is a tense and frightening experience.

Another challenge reported by teachers as they involve parents is that parent-teacher's meetings are stressful, tiring and time-consuming (Lemmer 2012:89). Lemmer (2012:92) adds that teachers use terms like 'tense-up' and 'being bombarded by parents' during conferences. This is an indication that tensions can arise between teachers and parents in the process of involvement.

#### 2.6.3 Teachers Lack of Training on Parental Involvement

LaRocque et al. (2011:115) mention that teachers admitted to have little information or training to effectively work with the diverse parents. This suggests that such teachers may face challenges in involving parents effectively due to lack of knowledge. Scholars see the need to include content on parental involvement in curricular for colleges and universities (Barnyak & McNelly 2009:51). Lemmer (2012:83-84) concurs that education programmes should provide pre-service teachers with the necessary training.

#### 2.6.4 Time

The time factor hinders parental involvement; for example, parents who work fulltime may not have time to be involved in the learning of their children (Bower & Griffin 2011:78). Watson et. al. (2012:46) reiterate that busy schedules hinder parents from being involved in the learning of their children.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011:41) concur that working parents find it difficult to have time for home-based and school-based parental involvement. In addition, Sapungan and Sapungan (2014:44) point out that some parents fail to attend school meetings that are held during working hours since this is inconvenient for them.

### 2.7 THE BENEFITS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

#### 2.7.1 Academic Achievement



Parental involvement enables children to excel in school and become productive and responsible members of society (Khajerpour & Ghazvini 2011:1205; Rafiq et al 2013:209). McNeal (2014:565) states that “the exact form of expected return is not always clear, but can include improved educational expectations, improved role performance (that is better attendance, increased homework done and reduced delinquency), increased achievement or strengthened relationships with the school personnel or other parents”. Parental involvement also leads to increased academic performance and cooperative behaviour (Bower & Griffin 2011:77; Deka 2016:59). When families, schools and community organisations work together, students produce the best outcomes (Velleymalay, 2012:42; Rafiq et al. 2013:211). Young et al. (2013:291) explain that parental involvement boosts a child’s level of competence and autonomy, offers a sense of security and connectedness, and helps to internalise the value of education and performance.

#### 2.7.2 Decision-making

Parental involvement can affect decision-making in education in various ways that are not related to the children’s achievement in school. Involving parents and community in decision-making may help in making the schools more accountable to the community (Von Otter 2014:557).

#### 2.7.3 Improved Discipline

Parental involvement is positive for children’s self-discipline, academic motivation and study persistence by enhancing self-esteem (Fuller 2010:1; Von Otter 2014:570). Parental involvement helps in reducing problem behaviours (McCormic et al. 2013:279).

#### 2.7.4 Improved Communication

Parental involvement improves communication between schools and parents (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014:47). Schools increase parental involvement through social networks which allow parents and learners to be able to access additional support or resources such as tutoring, enrichment opportunities and curriculum extensions beyond the school – aspects which help learners to achieve academic success (Bower & Griffin, 2011:77). Lekli and Kaloti (2015:102) explain that learners who know that the teacher communicates on a regular basis with their parents are likely to put more effort into school work.

#### 2.7.5 Understanding of the School Culture

When parents are involved, they will get to understand how stakeholders in schools contribute to enable learners to achieve (Rafiq et al. 2013:211). Parents may understand the school curriculum better (Sapungan & Sapungan 2014:47).

#### 2.7.6 Improved Relationships

When schools involve parents in the learning of their children, good relationships between the teachers and parents may be created, since parents may understand the activities of schools related to the learning of their children and assist accordingly (Rafiq et al. 2013:211; Zhou 2014:73). Good relationships may also be promoted when teachers visit learners' homes and have an understanding of the learners' situation and learning environment at home (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014:47). The teachers' understanding of the learners' situation at home may enable teachers to assist parents with practical ways of assisting their children's learning within the home environment (Fuller 2010:1; Vellymalay 2012:42). The interaction between teachers and parents may not only improve relationships, but may also be more responsive and sensitive to the children's social, emotional, intellectual and developmental needs (Sapungan & Sapungan 2014:47)

When parents are involved in the learning of their children, they become confident in their parenting and decision-making skills (Sapungan & Sapungan 2014:47). This helps in the learning of their children.

#### 2.7.7 Improved Support in Sports:

Involving parents in sports benefits the children in accessing some necessary services like transport (Mafa & Makuba 2013:39). When parents are involved in school activities like fund raising and assisting during sports days, it promotes the activities of the learners to succeed. Mahuro and Hungi (2016:5) also state that involving parents with special talents like knowledge of soccer helps children to improve their soccer skills.

#### 2.7.8 Improvement in Homework and Projects:

Homework is a tool to keep parents well informed of the child's strengths and weaknesses in several subject areas. When teachers communicate homework tasks to parents, it may position parents to be able to help their children to do homework effectively (Carr 2013:172; Sad & Gurbuzturk 2013:1009).

Parental involvement in homework enables children to use the home environment for the extension of school learning. Homework is a factor that increases learners' achievement and if properly utilised, it can be a valuable tool for reinforcing learning that takes place in the classroom (Carr 2013:169-170). Sapungan and Sapungan (2014:47) state that teachers' requests for parents to review and sign homework may help in making the learners consistently complete their homework.

Parental involvement helps parents to create school-like structures to support homework success; for example, arranging the environment or establishing schedules for time use (Gonida & Cortina 2014:376). Parents who are involved in homework activities may offer positive reinforcement that gives learners confidence to achieve positive outcomes in school (Xu, Benson, Mudrey-Camino & Steiner 2010:116).

Parental involvement promotes parents to take charge of the learning of their children and create activities that help learners (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016:5; Menheere & Hooge, 2010:151).

## 2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter started highlighted the content areas covered. The introduction included the definition of parental involvement, the nature of private schools, barriers and benefits of parental involvement. Parental involvement in Zimbabwe, Turkey, and United States of America were discussed. Theories of parental involvement discussed were cognitive, social and ecological systems theory. Barriers to parental involvement include lack of resources, lack of time and lack of clear definition of parental involvement, cultural influences, language barriers and negative attitudes. The benefits of parental involvement have been observed, namely, children's high academic achievement, self-discipline, decision-making and improved communication. Parental involvement also improves support in sports, homework, parent-school relationships and provision of a conducive working environment.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Methodology and procedures that were used in collecting data are outlined in this chapter. Research design, population and sampling techniques are discussed. Methods of data collection are explained and reasons for selecting them are highlighted. Ethical issues are explained and justified.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN.

The research is a qualitative case study of a private school in Windhoek. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:322) confirm that qualitative research is rich in narrative description. This made the design ideal as the study dwelt on descriptive data. This means it was an interactive and interpretive qualitative design in which the narrative approach was used.

Qualitative research was used since it allowed the researcher to gain firsthand information about the perceptions of participants (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:322). Maree (2013:50) confirms that qualitative research is interested in participants' perspectives on everyday practice and knowledge such as the issue under study. The researcher interacted with participants in their natural setting.

#### 3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

This research made use of semi-structured interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2005, as cited in Alshenqeet, 2014:40) explains that semi-structured interviews allow depth of insight to be achieved as they provide the interviewer with the opportunity for probing and clarity. Maree (2013:5) confirms that semi-structured questions allow for probing and clarification. Roberts-Holmes (2014:133) reiterates that open-ended questions enable the participants to express their views on a topic. Creswell (2012:218) explains that one-on-one interviews are suitable for participants who are not hesitant to speak and can share ideas comfortably.

#### 3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

##### 3.5.1 Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:128) define a population as "... a group of elements or cases whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to

which we intend to generalise the results of the research". Sekeran and Bougie (2011:263) concur that population refers to an entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. In this study, population refers to parents with children at a private school in Windhoek.

Parents under study ranged across the spectrum of socioeconomic status from low to high. Saifi and Mehmood (2011:120) mention that highly educated parents are associated with better incomes, more control and greater social support and networking while those who are less educated are often financially disadvantaged. Ogunshola and Adewale (2012:231) also note that socioeconomic status not only affects the academic performance but means that children from different social classes compete in the same academic environment. In this regard, the researcher involved both parents regardless of their socioeconomic status since the school accommodates them all.

#### 3.5.2 Sampling

Maree (2013:79) defines sampling as the process used for selecting a portion of population with specific characteristics for study. In this study, nine parents with children at a private school in Windhoek, who were willing to participate, were used as a sample from which data was collected.

Parents chosen to participate in the interview were those with children from Grades 1 to 3 at a private school in Windhoek. They comprised a mixture of those from low economic status and from high socioeconomic status. These parents were numbered and coded after they had been randomly selected for interviewing.

#### 3.5.3 Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was used in this study. Purposive sampling means that participants were selected because they were likely to have the data needed for answering the research question. As used in this study, purposive sampling constituted the selection of information-rich cases (Maree 2013:79; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:138).

#### 3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical considerations are an important aspect of qualitative research. Creswell (2012:228) points out that the process needs a sufficient level of trust. As such, care

must be exercised when using humans as participants to ensure that their rights are protected.

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:264) mention the need for participants to know that they are taking part in the research. In this regard, the researcher explained the purpose of the research to participants in order for them to make an informed decision as to whether to participate.

Mathipa and Gumbo (2015:37) note that ethical clearance is an important prerequisite for entering the field of data. Permission to conduct the study was given by UNISA's Ethics Committee (Appendix A) and by the school (Appendix B).

Participants also need to give their consent to participate. As such, participants were asked to sign a consent form to agree to participate (Appendix D and E). They were also informed that they could withdraw if they wished. This was done to respect their right to participate or not. Participants were assured of their privacy and confidentiality. They were informed that their identities would not be disclosed and information they gave would not be revealed to other people (Maree 2013:301; Mathipa & Gumbo 2015:37). This procedure is supported by Sekeran and Bougie (2011:221) who mention the need for researchers to protect participants' confidentiality.

Appointments to meet the school principal were done in person in order to arrange the most convenient time to meet the participants. The researcher made appointments with parents who were interviewed. The permission of parents was sought from them directly so as to enable them to make an informed decision concerning their involvement. This agrees with the advice of McMillan and Schumacher (2010:329) that there is need for the researcher to locate and gain access to the site or network of persons during the planning phase.

The participants were also assured that, in this study, information would be used only for research purposes. Maree (2013:42) highlights that the researcher should destroy the information recorded soon after transcribing it in order to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

In order to increase credibility, the researcher findings from interviews and related this to the relevant literature. Maree (2013:113) confirms that the researcher would have confidence if different sources point to the same conclusion.

### 3.7 DATA COLLECTION

Interview questions were designed for parents. Each interview consisted of eight questions in (Appendix E). Participants were asked the same questions using the same wording, but differences occurred with follow-up questions asked to get greater clarity (Sekeran & Bougie 2011:187). Creswell (2012:261) mentions that stories can be collected from individuals and the researcher can ask them for more information to fill the gaps in their stories.

Audio recordings were done during interviews with the consent of the interviewees. Proceedings of the interviews were recorded to ensure that all the information was captured. In support of this Sekeran and Bouge (2011:192) mention that recordings can be done if the participant has no objections. Roberts-Holmes (2014:147) explains that audio recordings allow the researcher to replay the interview and obtain a level of understanding and analysis that is difficult to achieve from written notes taken during an interview. Audio recordings were transcribed. This is supported by Sekeran and Bougie (2011:193) who mention that the responses should be transcribed immediately and should not be trusted to memory. Data was transcribed immediately to avoid loss of information. Interviews were then transcribed, reviewed and examined to find the common threads. For those who preferred not to be recorded, the researcher wrote notes during the interview sessions.

### 3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher transcribed the interviews then read them carefully in order to have a full understanding of what the participant had said (Marshall & Rossman 2011:47). This process was repeated so that no information was missed. Coding was then done by assigning a colour to each category (Lacey & Luff 2009:22). This was done by looking at themes and ideas. Data were coded thematically using themes from the interviews. The themes were then tabulated and inferences made in order to address the research questions.

Categories were refined by listing key ideas and phrases. Major ideas were categorised to give meaning to similarly coded data (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:377).

The aim of qualitative data analysis is to interpret and make sense of what is in the data. To achieve this aim, data analysis had to be carried out systematically and

through applying creativity. Maree (2013:261) cautions that there is no fixed recipe to analyse data but there are guidelines to ensure credibility and trustworthy.

The researcher had to familiarise herself with the data by going through the interview questions and the transcribed scripts several times to get a clearer understanding of the information.

### 3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter outlined the research methodology and the procedures that the research employed to obtain the answers to the research questions. Semi-structured interviews were used and data were analysed thematically. The intended population of the study was parents with children at a private school in Windhoek. Purposive sampling was chosen to select participants who might have opinions on parental involvement. Ethical considerations were also explained. Chapter 4 deals with data presentation and analysis.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Data are presented from the results of fieldwork. The data were collected from parents with children at a private school in Windhoek. Nine parents were selected as participants. Parents were identified using letters of the alphabet (A–H) for confidentiality reasons.

#### 4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

##### 4.2.1.1 Gender

Of the nine participants, six were female.

##### 4.2.1.2 Age

Of the nine participants, five were between 30 and 40 years of age, three were aged between 40 and 50, and one was older than 50.

##### 4.2.1.3 Qualifications

Of the nine participants, one had a master's degree, four had an honours degree, two had diplomas, one participant held a higher certificate, while one parent did not have tertiary education.

##### 4.2.1.4 Employment status

Of the nine participants, two were teachers, two were nurses, one was an accountant, two were self-employed and two were unemployed.

##### 4.2.1.5 Home language

The home language of the five participants was English; two spoke Afrikaans at home; one spoke Oshiwambo and one spoke Herero.

The majority of the participants were female and younger than 40 years. Most of them had obtained tertiary education. Consequently, they spoke English at home and were employed. The biographical information of the participants indicates that the majority were middle-class parents who could afford the school fees and other monies required by private schools.

#### 4.3 THEMES

##### 4.3.1 Theme 1: Parental Involvement in Learning

Of the nine participants, eight said they helped their children with homework, while one participant mentioned that she only supplied her child with school books.

Parent B said: *“I help my child with homework everyday and this helps me to see the performance of my child, and the one – on - one meetings with teachers are very informative, now I know my child’s strength and weakness. These help me to assist my child accordingly.”*

Parent G said: *“I supply my child with school books but I don’t have time to assist him with homework since I work until late.”*

The results indicate that assisting children with homework at home was the most common activity that almost all the participants did in helping their children with learning. The reason for this could be that most of the parents had attained a certain level of education and were, therefore, in a position to help their children. The other reason for the popularity of homework among parents could be that the activity took place at home, and parents did not have to go to school to do it. The one participant who only provided books did not have time to become involved in homework due to coming home late from work.

#### 4.3.2 Theme 2: Reasons for Parents’ Lack of Involvement

Of the nine participants, six participants said they failed to be involved due to lack of time, three participants said they did not have any challenges in being involved.

Parent C said, *“I don’t have time to be involved since I travel a lot.”*

Parent B said, *“I am not employed, so I have time to help the child with school work and to attend to school activities.”*

The majority of the participants failed to become involved in the education of their children because they did not have time to do so. Coming home late and being tired after work could be the reason why the participants did not have time to become involved with their children’s school matters. The majority of the parents were employed. This implies that they spent the whole day at work. Given the high level of education of most of the participants, they may be occupying positions of high responsibility, which may put a lot of pressure on them. They may also be taking work home, thus having no time to become involved in the education of their children.

#### 4.3.3 Theme 3: Attendance at Parents' Meetings

Of the nine participants, two participants mentioned that they failed to attend meetings due to busy schedules, one participant mentioned being tired after work and six participants mentioned that they attended parents' meetings.

Parent E said, *"It is costly to come to school in the morning to drop children, pick them late afternoon and then drive back again to school for the meeting."*

Parent I said, *"It is difficult and costly for me as a single parent to balance work and then attend to school meetings again."*

Parent F said, *"I have no car, so going to school for a meeting by taxi is costly and also not safe to travel at night since most of the meetings are held at night."*

The implications from the above quotes are that parents failed to attend meetings due to busy schedules and being tired after work. Some parents were also challenged with transport costs. Challenges faced by single parents such as failing to balance time demanded from them by school activities and their responsibilities as family heads were some of the emerging hurdles that mitigated against their attending of meetings at school. Six parents did not mention transport and costs as a problem and they attended parents' meetings.

#### 4.3.4 Theme 4: Frequency of Meetings with Teachers

Of the nine participants, two participants mentioned that they met the teacher of their children as they dropped off or picked up their children, and whenever the teacher wished to meet them. Four participants indicated that they met the teacher once or twice per term when the school called for a one-on-one meeting. Three participants indicated that they sometimes completed the whole term without meeting the teachers due to limited time.

Parent A said, *"I meet with the teacher of my child once or twice every term when there is an official meeting."*

Parent H said, *"I normally meet the teacher of my child once per term because of busy schedules."*

The results indicate that most parents seldom met with teachers of their children. The participants who indicated that they did not meet with teachers might have been

employed in working environments with very tight work schedules, thus prohibiting them from meeting with the teachers of their children. The participants who mentioned that they frequently met with teachers were probably not formally employed or were self-employed, and as such, had enough time at their disposal to do so. It could also be that their work schedules were flexible.

#### 4.3.5 Theme 5: Support in Sports or Extra-Mural Activities

All nine participants mentioned that they transported their children to and from the sports venues. Three participants indicated that they attended sports events and cheered their children as they participated, while the other six mentioned that they did not attend sports events since they were conducted during week days when they were at work.

Parent B said, *“I always take my son to and from the sports venue during sports days.”*

Parent I said, *“I transport my child to sports venue on my way to work then pick her after work.”*

The results demonstrate that all parents transported their children to sports or extra-mural activities. It is possible that sports events were scheduled to start and end during times that were suitable for parents to transport their children, or parents made arrangements with their employers or took time off work only for dropping their children at sports events and collecting them when the events ended. This implies that the majority of parents may not have had enough time to stay throughout the sporting events and support their children. The few participants who attended sports events could have been unemployed, or their work schedules allowed them to do so.

#### 4.3.6 Theme 6: Benefits of Parental Involvement

All the nine participants mentioned that parental involvement was important for the children to do well in school.

Parent H said, *“My child is always on the top achiever list because I help her with everything the school assigns her to do, for example, homework and other school projects.”*

Parent A said, *“I can see how my child is improving in his school work because of my involvement.”*

The analysis shows that all the participants believed that parental involvement helped children to improve academically. The parents easily noticed improvements that their children made in their school work when they became involved.

#### 4.3.7 Theme 7: Other Benefits of Involvement

Of the nine parents, two participants noted that if parents were involved in supporting sporting activities, their children's performance in sports would improve. Three participants said that parental involvement built strong relationship between parents and teachers, and four participants mentioned that parental involvement helped in the development of the school.

Parent D said, "When parents work together with teachers, the school will develop."

Parent E said, *"I have realised that parental involvement helps in development of the school as parents make their contributions."*

The results show that majority of the parents felt that parental involvement helped in the development of the school, followed by those who mentioned that it strengthened the bond between parents and teachers. Some parents also mentioned that when parents supported sporting activities, the performance of their children in sports improved.

#### 4.3.8 Theme 8: Ways of improving Parental Involvement

Of the nine parents, five participants mentioned the need for parents to be educated on the importance of parental involvement and areas where they needed to be involved. Four participants mentioned that the school should keep on using various ways of communicating, such as the children's diary and WhatsApp platforms.

Parent B said, *"The school should find ways of educating parents on the importance of parental involvement."*

Parent G said, *"Parents need to be informed on areas in which they can be involved."*

The above results demonstrate that the main way of improving parental involvement would be through parents being educated on the importance of parental involvement and how to be involved. This could be because participants might not be aware of

other areas in which they could be involved. Parents might also not be aware of why it would be important to be involved.

#### 4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented the results of the study. The main factor was helping with homework – which an overwhelming majority of participants engaged with. There were a few participants who mentioned attending school meetings. Parents also supported their children in sports, although for the majority of parents this was limited to transporting them, and not watching them taking part in sports.

The next chapter focuses on a discussion of the results, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to examine parental involvement at a private school in Windhoek. The chapter starts with discussion on the findings followed by conclusions and recommendations of the research.

#### 5.2 SUMMARISED FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

##### 5.2.1 Findings from Literature Study

The literature study revealed the following as barriers to parental involvement:

1. Lack of resources: Lack of transportation, no funding assigned to develop parental involvement and inadequate furniture and textbooks.
2. Tensions between parents and teachers: Cultural differences and poor cooperation between teachers and parents.
3. Teachers' lack of training on parental involvement: Due to lack of training on the subject, teachers were unable to meaningfully engage parents on how they could be involved in the learning of their children.
4. Time: Parents not making time to visit the school or to meet teachers.

The literature also revealed that parental involvement:

1. enables children to excel academically in school.
2. influences educational decision-making.
3. helps to reduce behavioural problems among learners.
4. improves communication between schools and parents.
5. helps in understanding the school culture and the ways in which school, family and community share their responsibilities with learners.
6. create good relationships between the teachers and parents.
7. provides necessary services like transport, fund raising and assisting during sports days.

8. improves homework and projects leading to an increase in learners' achievement.

#### 5.2.2 Findings from the Empirical Study

The results indicated that the majority of the participants were female and married. Their ages ranged between 30 and 40 years. The majority of participants were educated up to tertiary level, were formally employed and spoke English as their home language.

The results also revealed that:

1. the majority of parents helped their children with homework;
2. did not have time to be involved in some aspects of the education of their children;
3. six of the parents attended parents' meetings, while three never did so;
4. six of the parents met with teachers of their children, while three never did so; and
5. the majority of parents transported their children to and from sports venues, but did not stay to witness their children participate in sport.

A way of improving parental involvement noted by participants was:

1. education on the importance of parental involvement and areas where they needed to be involved.

#### 5.3 DISCUSSION

The results show that most parents assisted their children with homework to improve their academic performance. Parental involvement in homework was the most popular way perceived by parents as positively contributing to their children's academic performance. The reason why most parents assisted with homework could be that it was convenient, since parents did it in the comfort of their homes. It could be that homework was popular because of the parents' level of education, since most of the parents were educated or had reached tertiary level of education – which might indicate that they were able to help. Homework could have presented parents with an opportunity to engage with their children. It might also be that homework was the way in which teachers thought parents could help in improving the academic performance



of children. It is also possible that homework could have been a way through which parents communicated with their children on how they were progressing with their school work.-The teachers' expectations from parents at a private school could be that parents also needed to participate in the learning of their children, and homework could be one way of parental involvement in the education of their children. Furthermore, parents of children at the private school were mainly of high socioeconomic status, and such parents tend to impress teachers with their children's appearance and performance (Kainuwa & Yusef 2013:2).

The participants indicated that they were all involved in sports through transporting their children to and from sports events. Sport is regarded as important at the private school, and there are many sporting codes available which makes it possible for everyone to be involved in at least one sports code. Private schools are also serious about sports by engaging private coaches with expertise in different sporting codes. This could have been a factor that motivated or compelled parents to transport their children to sports events.

However, parents could have failed to stay at their children's sporting events due to their work schedules. The positions the parents held, due to their level of education, may be in the middle or top management – thus making it difficult for these parents to be away from work for a long time. Hence they could only manage to transport their children to the sporting events. The reason why parents managed to transport their children to sporting events could be that the time schedules for such events did not interfere with their daily routines at particular times, or parents could make arrangements to be away from work for only a short while. It could be that it was compulsory for all learners to attend to sports events, hence the need to be transported to these sports events.

Communication between the school and parents was done through various media such as cell phones, emails and diary books. These media were used to communicate with parents who were not able to regularly visit the school. Other parents who could have communicated with the school using the above media did not do so due to lack of time.

Most parents were educated and financially able to enrol their learners in a private school. They generally expressed positive attitudes about parental involvement.

However, time constraints due to tight work schedules and lack of clear instructions on how to be involved emerged as common factors that hindered them from being involved. Generally, there was good rapport between parents and teachers at the private school due to the respect/recognition that teachers showed to parents owing to the parents' professions, socioeconomic status and level of education. In fact, most parents matched teachers in terms of socioeconomic status; hence, there was cooperation, mutual respect and understanding between the two parties.

#### 5.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to one private school in Windhoek which implies that results cannot be generalised. The participants consisted of a small group parents with children at the private school.

#### 5.5 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE EMPIRICAL PROCESS

The time to gather information was limited to late afternoons and weekends such that it took a long time to conduct interviews at times that were convenient to participants.

#### 5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The findings show that some parents at the private school were actively involved in the education of their children, while others were partly involved, and yet others were not. Homework was the most common activity in which almost all the participants were involved, while watching their children participate in sport was the activity in which the participants were least involved. The majority of the participants were involved in attending meetings, meeting teachers of their children and transporting their children to sporting events. The lack of time, lack of knowledge on how to be involved and busy schedules were indicated as the reasons that made involvement difficult for the parents who were not actively involved.

#### 5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made in order to improve parental involvement:

1. Teachers should educate parents on areas in which they can be involved in the education of their children.
2. The school should hold parents' meetings over weekends, and teachers should be available for parents over weekends. A schedule can be done to regulate such meetings.

3. Teachers should educate parents on the various communication media available between the two parties. The importance of regular contact can be emphasised in the discussion sessions.

#### 5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research should focus on the view of teachers on parental involvement. This would help to compare their views with that of parents and focus on areas that need to be improved upon. Future research can also compare parental involvement with other schools in Windhoek in order to compare and contrast the findings and then come up with solutions to improve parental involvement on a wider scale.

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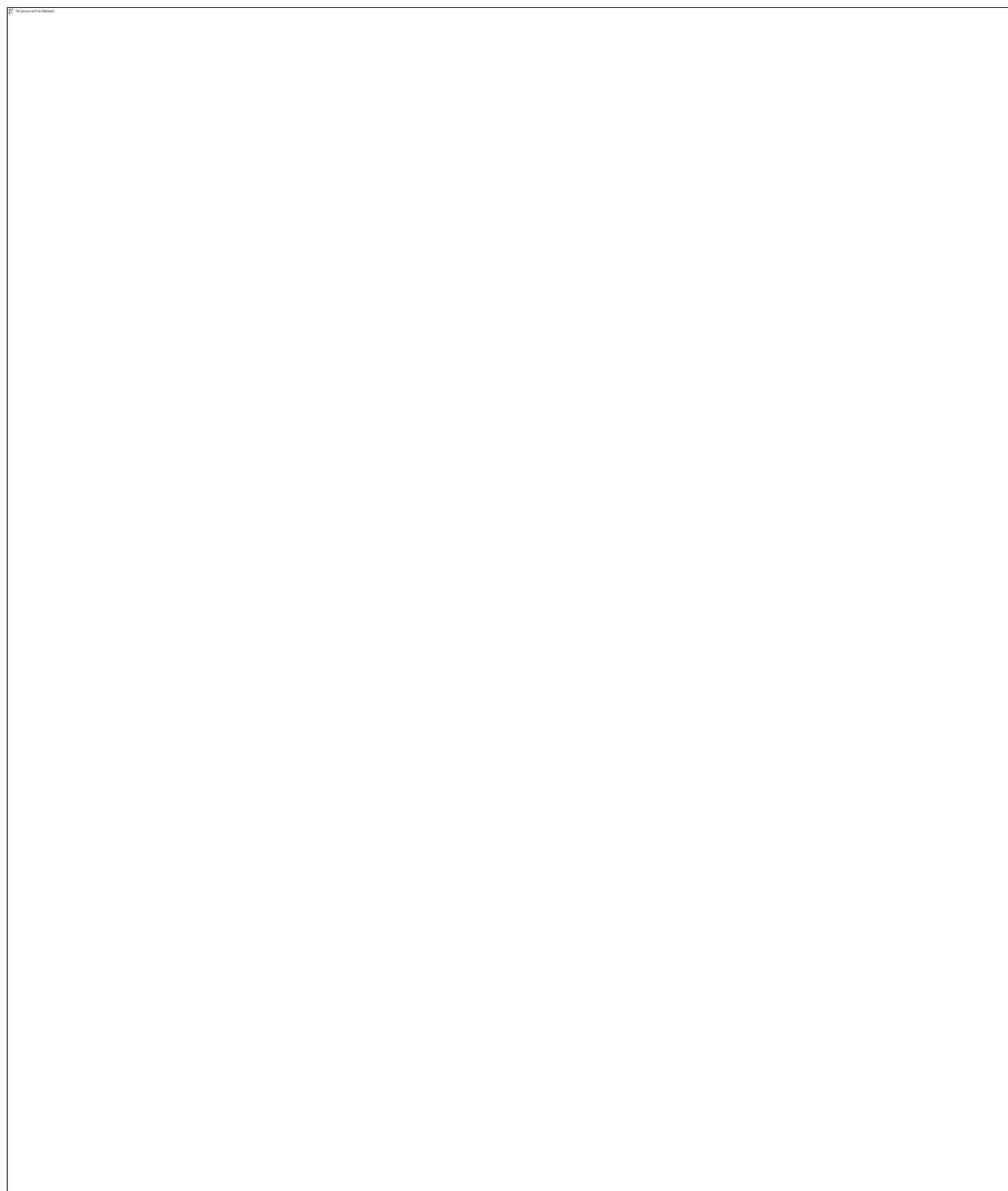
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: PERMISSION FROM UNISA ETHICS COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

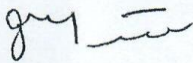


3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2022/02/13**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

**Note:**

*The reference number **2019/02/13/53606817/22/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof AT Motlhabane**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



**Prof V McKay**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA.

**The involvement of parents in the learning of their children at a private school in Windhoek, Namibia**

XYZ School

SCHOOL STAMP

## APPENDIX C: REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Rumbidzai E Makamani am conducting as part of my research as a masters student **The involvement of parents in the learning of their children at a private school in Windhoek, Namibia** at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by **the Department of Adult Basic Education and Youth Development towards a M Ed** and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of **the involvement of parents in the learning of their children** in education is substantial and well documented. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve on parental involvement.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 30 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office.

The benefits of this study are that **the findings can help in reviewing of a policy that would help in parental involvement** and there are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact **Rumbidzai Elizabeth Makamani on 0814101461 or email makamanir@yahoo.com**. The findings are accessible for five years.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at **Rumbidzai Elizabeth Makamani on 0814101461 or email makamanir@yahoo.com..**

I look forward to speaking to you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I request you to sign the consent form.

Yours sincerely

**Rumbidzai Elizabeth Makamani**



**25 March 2018**

**Researcher's name (print)**

**Researcher's signature:**

**Date:**



## APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT CONSENT



### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Date 25 March 2018

Title: The involvement of parents in the learning of their children at a private school in Windhoek, Namibia

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Rumbidzai Eizabeth Makamani and I am doing research under the supervision of Professor Motseke Masilonyana, a professor, in the Department of Adult Basic Education and Youth Development towards a M Ed. Adult Education at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled; The involvement of parents in the learning of their children at a private school in Windhoek, Namibia.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could help to improve parental involvement at a private school in Windhoek

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because you are a parent at the school and would like to find out how you are involved in the learning of your child at the school. I obtained your contact details from the contact list of parents at the school. The approximate number of participants are nine parents.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves semi-structured interviews. Your role as a participant will be to answer the interview questions.

The questions for interviews are as follows;

1. Why are some parents not involved in the learning of their children?
2. What are the benefits of parental involvement?
3. In which areas can parents be involved in the learning of their children?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the involvement process?

The time allocated to conduct interviews will be 30 minutes for each participant.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The benefits of taking part in this study is that the findings can help in reviewing of a policy that would help in parental involvement.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There are no negative consequences in participating in this research since the participants will just answer interview questions and confidentiality will be maintained.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one, apart from the researcher will know about your involvement or connect to the answers you give in this research.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher's home for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Information of interview notes recordings will be destroyed by shredding paper notes and audio recordings will be permanently deleted.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Participating in this research will be voluntary and there will be no payment or incentive for participating in this study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa, (UNISA). A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

#### HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Rumbidzai Elizabeth Makamani on 0814101461 or email makamanir@yahoo.com. The findings are accessible for five years.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Professor Masilonyana Motseke University of South Africa (UNISA) Building10, Room 01-39, Sunnyside Campus, Justice Mohamed Street, Pretoria, 0003. email:motsmj@unisa.ac.za, Telephone (012) 4812867 Fax (012) 4841059, Fax: (012) 4841059.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Masilonyana Motseke, University of South Africa (UNISA) Building10, Room 01-39, Sunnyside Campus, Justice Mohamed Street, Pretoria, 0003. email:motsmj@unisa.ac.za, Telephone (012) 4812867 Fax (012) 4841059, Fax: (012) 4841059.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



Rumbidzai Elizabeth Makamani

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview session.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) Rumbidzai Elizabeth Makamani



25 March 2018

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian's name (print) \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rumbidzai Elizabeth Makamani



25 March 2018

Researcher's name (print) \_\_\_\_\_ Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Name: (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How can parents become involved in the education of their children?
2. Why are some parents not involved in the education of their children?
3. Why are some parents not attending parents' meetings?
4. What do you do to support your child with schoolwork?
5. How often do you meet with the teachers of your child?
6. What do you do to support your child in sport or extra-mural activities?
7. What can be done to improve parental involvement?
8. In which areas can parents be involved in the learning of their children?

